

EXHIBIT NO. 12

DATE: 3.27.13

BILL NO. SB 393 / SB 395

**Medicaid Expansion SB 393 & SB 395 PROPON**

**TO:** Chairman Senator Jason Priest, Vice-Chair Terry Murphy, members of Sen. Committee

**FROM:** Mary Ann Dunwell, Helena resident, Montana citizen 461-5358

Good afternoon Mr. Chair, members of the committee and staff. I'm Mary Ann Dunwell, Helena resident, Montana citizen - and for full disclosure, a state employee here on my own time, not state time.

Thank you for the chance to speak in favor of expanding Medicaid. When I was pregnant with my son 18 years ago, my husband and I had lost our jobs. Our COBRA insurance - that was not cheap - was due to run out before my due date. I developed a serious medical condition called eclampsia. My son and I landed in intensive care and almost died. Thank God we recovered, but we faced huge medical bills. If we had had the benefit of expanded Medicaid back then, we could have escaped financial hardship.

That was a while ago and not here in Montana. And although I marvel at how we Montanans help one another, no \$15 a plate spaghetti dinner, chili feed or quilt raffle can approach sustainable, affordable, accessible healthcare coverage.

Many Montanans are one crisis away from losing everything. Mounting medical bills can throw anyone of us into bankruptcy. Expanding Medicaid would guard against that. It would help our neighbors who grow our food, work our Main Streets and raise our families. The 68 to 70,000 people who expanding Medicaid would cover are not just numbers. They're somebody's loved one, somebody's neighbor, somebody's friend.

Some legislators apparently want to wait and do an interim study first. Wait for what? For people to lose their homes and everything they've worked for because medical bills swallowed any savings and put them so deeply into debt? Wait for our young people to leave Montana for healthcare jobs in other states that accepted federal Medicaid money? Wait for our own healthcare providers to leave for a better deal outside of Montana? Wait for someone to get an illness that could've been prevented with access to screening and better prevention? Wait for someone's sickness to get so bad it's beyond treatable? Wait for people to die?

Despite the overwhelming support for Medicaid expansion from all corners, with all due respect, in my heart I'm afraid you're going to vote down this great deal for Montana. Even though you enjoy state government-provided health insurance. This is about life and death - and quality of life - but I'm afraid the majority will put political agendas before the health and well-being of Montanans - the very people who voted you into office to do the right thing by them. In closing, I pray and beg you to prove me wrong. Please live up to your committee name, uphold the public health, welfare and safety and vote for SB 393 and 395. Thank you.



## **Medicaid Expansion SB 393 & SB 395 PROPONENT Testimony**

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to provide adequate primary care, a financial investment against future complex illness.

RiverStone Health in Billings is a Community Health Center. Community Health Centers provide excellent, high quality care that has consistently been shown to be more cost-effective than other alternatives. Our clinic was one of the first 11 locations in the country to be designated as a Teaching Health Center. We serve as the Safety Net for Yellowstone County, providing excellent care, and are the first clinic in the region and the second in the state to achieve Patient Centered Medical Home 2011 recognition from the National Committee for Quality Assurance. We recruit 8 new residents per year in a highly competitive process, attracting close to 100 applications for each available placement. Although our residents come from all parts of the country, over 70% remain in Montana, like I did to practice. With your permission, I have a map to handout which shows where our resident graduates are practicing throughout the state. Our residents are trained to provide low-cost care for vulnerable populations in low-resource settings.

At present, almost 2/3 of our patients are uninsured and last year we provided care to nearly 8,000 people who would be eligible for Medicaid expansion. These people are responsible, employed members of our community, often working more than one job to support their families. They pay what they can, but some live with extremely limited margins and can pay little at all. Often it is these patients who forego an early and prudent visit to me because of the financial consequences. Our ability to continue to meet the needs of our community, particularly the most vulnerable, is largely dependent upon the ability of these - the working poor - to afford high-quality preventative care and medical treatment.

For these reasons – because it will alleviate the burden of uncompensated care, because it will ensure ongoing high-quality care, and because it will result in healthier families and communities - I ask that you give these bills a Do Pass Recommendation.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee.



EXHIBIT NO. 13DATE: 3.27.13BILL NO. SB 395

March 25, 2013

Dear members of the Senate Public Health, Welfare and Safety Committee,

Re: SB395 Medicaid Expansion

The Billings Chamber of Commerce/Convention and Visitors Bureau and Big Sky Economic Development Authority offer the following information for your consideration regarding the proposed expansion of Medicaid for the state of Montana.

Billings is home to an ever growing medical community and we are proud of the fact that we are a regional center for many types of specialized medicine. Both the Billings Chamber and Big Sky EDA work very closely with our medical community and support and encourage the growth of this industry in Billings.

Currently, there are 7,245 uninsured adults in Yellowstone County who would be eligible for Medicaid if the proposed expansion passes. For Yellowstone County, this expansion has the potential to create over 1400 jobs and generate approximately \$60 million dollars in labor income annually. These are dollars that will primarily be spent in Montana in general and Billings in particular. The total economic impact potentially could be two or three times greater.

The 7,245 individuals currently are unable to afford preventative care services, and emergency services usually become unreimbursed costs and must be absorbed by the healthcare facility treating one of these individuals. In Montana roughly \$125 million dollars was provided at no charge for low income Montanans. These costs are shifted, in turn, to private and self-insured plans, resulting in higher costs for employers and their employees.

While expansion is important, the second criteria we feel is essential is to reform Medicaid. We believe that it should be managed by a private company or companies rather than by DPPHS. We have the opportunity with this expansion to implement Medicaid reforms and meaningful cost containment measures that would ensure we get better value for the tax dollars we spend.

If we fail to expand Medicaid, those 7,245 people in Yellowstone County, mainly parents and other adults working for low wages will be left without insurance. Effectively, they will have no alternative options since they make too much money to qualify for Medicaid but too little to be eligible for tax credits to purchase private health insurance.

We ask that you support the expansion of Medicaid in the state of Montana, including meaningful reform.

Sincerely,

John Brewer, CAE  
President and CEO  
Billings Chamber of Commerce/CVB

Steve Arveschoug  
Executive Director  
Big Sky Economic Development Authority